

3-14-22

Senator Winfield, Representative Stafstrom, distinguished members of the Joint Committee on the Judiciary.

My name is Marie Juergens. I am an East Hartford resident, and I am an activist with **Power Up Connecticut, Power Up Manchester, and Power Up East Hartford.**

I am writing IN SUPPORT of:

- S.B. No. 387 AN ACT CONCERNING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE JUVENILE JUSTICE POLICY AND OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE.
- S.B. No. 392 AN ACT CONCERNING STATEMENTS MADE BY JUVENILES.

I am writing IN STRONG OPPOSITION to the following bills:

- S.B. No. 365 AN ACT CONCERNING JUVENILE AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORMS
- S.B. No. 388: AN ACT CONCERNING THE DEFENSE OF A PERSON OR A PERSON'S DWELLING, PLACE OF WORK OR MOTOR VEHICLE.
- H.B. No. 5418 AN ACT REVISING JUVENILE AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE STATUTES AND INSURANCE STATUTES CONCERNING THEFT OF A MOTOR VEHICLE
- H.B. No. 5417 AN ACT CONCERNING JUVENILE JUSTICE AND SERVICES AND FIREARMS BACKGROUND CHECKS.
- S.B. No. 386 AN ACT CONCERNING A STUDY OF THE JUVENILE DELINQUENCY LAWS OF THIS STATE.
- S.B. No. 16 AN ACT ADDRESSING GUN VIOLENCE AND JUVENILE CRIME

I am testifying in opposition to the bills I listed above because they are rooted in false claims that Connecticut is experiencing tremendously high rates of crime being committed by youth. This is simply not supported by data. This crime rhetoric is being used by some legislators and groups such as "Safe Streets" to cause fear and push for reforms that, in the end, will result in more Black and Brown youth and low-income White youth becoming involved in the juvenile justice system. Organizations such as Safe Streets only promote racist dog whistles and white supremacy. They have not provided any real solution for issues related to crime in our state.

This issue is important to me because in working with **Keren Prescott, CEO of Power Up Manchester**, I have seen firsthand the difference made when adults invest their time and energy into improving the lives of children.

Organizations like Power Up create real opportunities for children and teens to thrive, on a limited budget reliant on donations. Keren Prescott identified that children in Manchester needed not only safe spaces, but also mentoring and engagement that boosts them physically and mentally. Legislators should take note of the success Keren Prescott has already had in one year with her **EmpowerU** program through Power Up, and ask themselves: 1. How can I assist in getting her more financial support? and 2. How can we create, support, and sustain programs like this across the state? We should be looking at ways to prevent crime, not incarcerate children. Preventing juvenile crime starts with investing in the needs of our youth.

I urge you to SUPPORT S.B. No. 392 and S.B. No. 387 with the recommendations submitted by the Connecticut Justice Alliance. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to testify today.

Marie Juergens

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